

# Invasive Aquatic Plants and Animals

Placement or introduction of some aquatic plants and animals into South Carolina waters is environmentally unsafe. Some non-native species rapidly reproduce and harm waterways and native aquatic life.

Preventing the introduction and spread of non-native, invasive species is the responsibility of all outdoor enthusiasts. Residents and visitors should be familiar with state and federal laws and regulations on possession, movement, and introduction of non-native plants and wildlife before introducing any living material into South Carolina waters. Any intentional or unintentional introduction may be a violation of law.

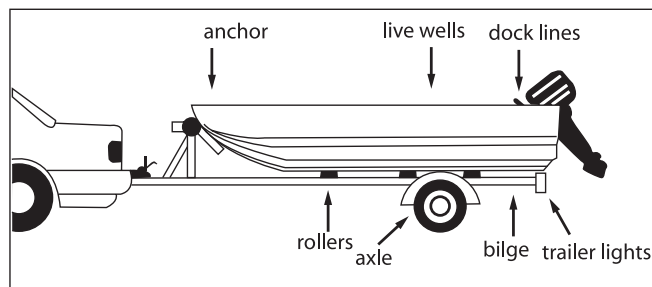
Other than for research or under a permit, it is not lawful to possess, sell, or place into any waters many water plants including hydrilla, water hyacinth, water lettuce, giant Salvinia, and any other plant on the state or Federal Noxious Weed List. Without a permit it is unlawful to introduce, import, possess, or transport for release any species of marine or freshwater fish or invertebrate not already found in the wild or not native to South Carolina. Exemptions are allowed for possession for exhibition purposes only by municipal zoos or parks, circuses, public museums and scientific or educational institutions.

SCDNR will not grant a permit unless it finds that the aquatic species was taken lawfully in the jurisdiction of origin and that the importation, release, or possession of the plant or animal is not reasonably expected to adversely impact South Carolina natural resources or wildlife populations.

SCDNR may issue special import permits to qualified persons for research and education for specific types of non-indigenous freshwater fish, otherwise they are prohibited for possession or sale. Examples include certain catfish, electric eel,

## Where to Look for Aquatic Hitchhikers on Boats

Regular cleaning of your boat, motor, and trailer before and after using all South Carolina waters can greatly reduce the spread of aquatic nuisance species. It takes just a minute to protect our waterways.



### When you leave a body of water:

- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment.
- Eliminate water from equipment before transporting.
- Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.).
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of the body of water.
- Report aquatic weed problems in public waters to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Program, SCDNR, 803-755-2872, [invasiveweeds@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:invasiveweeds@dnr.sc.gov)

walking catfish, piranha, stickleback, Mexican banded tetra, sea lamprey, and snakehead. Stocking and removal of non-reproducing white amur or grass carp hybrids are lawful, but only when approved by SCDNR. The importation of tropical fish, reptiles, or amphibians for sale as pets generally does not require a permit. However, the importation or possession of a protected species is prohibited unless a permit is issued.

Because of shellfish disease introduction, it is unlawful to place oysters, clams, or mussels brought from other states into the state's saltwaters. Even open shells may have non-native animals attached or harbor diseases that will affect native shellfish. Shellfish growers may be permitted to import shellfish from safe waters.

For more information:

**Website** - [dnr.sc.gov/water/envaff/aquatic/](http://dnr.sc.gov/water/envaff/aquatic/)

**Email** - [invasiveweeds@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:invasiveweeds@dnr.sc.gov)

**Phone** - Aquatic Plants 803-755-2872

Freshwater 803-734-3808

Saltwaters 843-953-9062

Shellfish Recycling 843-953-9300

## Aquatic Invasive Species of Primary Concern

- Aquatic Plants: hydrilla, water hyacinth, water lettuce, giant salvinia, phragmites
- Invertebrates: Green Mussels, Zebra Mussels (Not here yet)
- Fish: flathead catfish, spotted bass, Asian carp, lionfish

## Aquatic Invasive Species Introduction Concerns

- Aquarium pets
- Ornamental pond plants
- Invasive bait fish and crayfish
- Invasive aquaculture species
- Marine fish, shellfish, shrimp, pathogens and diseases
- Ballast water discharge



**STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**  
Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.  
[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

## Don't Give Invasive Species A Free Ride

Don't Transfer Fish Between Water Bodies

Dispose of Bait Properly

Dispose of Shrimp Parts Properly

Recycle Used Oyster Shells

Don't Release Aquarium Animals

Clean Boats and Equipment